2003-2004

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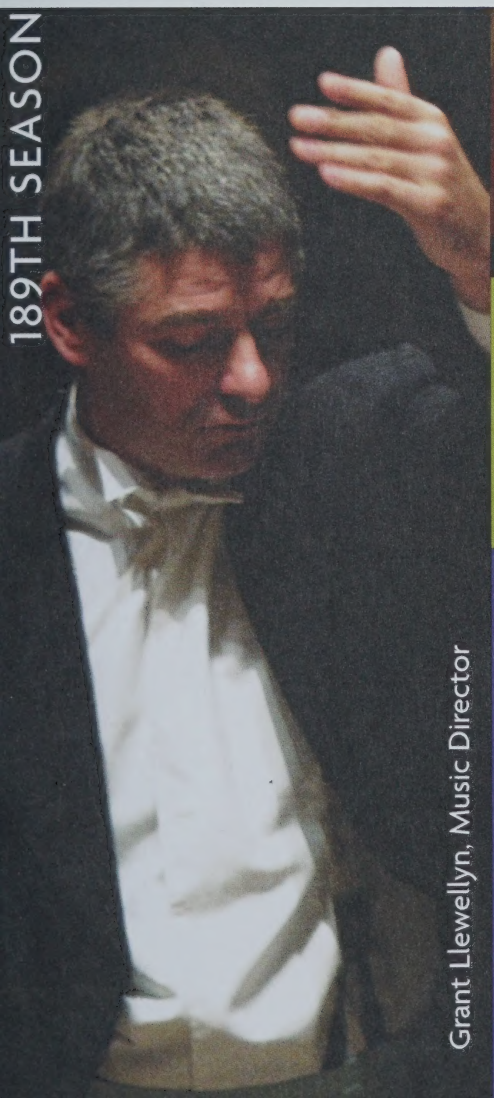

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The Devil's Trill

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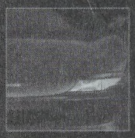

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Grant Llewellyn, Music Director

Christopher Hogwood, Conductor Laureate

Program

2003-2004 Season

Friday, January 16, 8.00pm — NEC's Jordan Hall, Boston
Sunday, January 18, 3.00pm — Jesuit Urban Center, Boston

Daniel Stepner, directing

Sonata for Cello in A Minor, Op. 1, No. 5 — Salvatore Lanzetti (ca. 1710-ca. 1780)
Adagio • Allegro • Menuetto: Andante

Reinmar Seidler, cello

Concerto for Viola da Gamba in D Major — Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770)
Largo • Allegro • Grave • Allegro assai

Laura Jeppesen, viola da gamba

Sonata for Violin in G Minor, "The Devil's Trill" — Tartini
Andante • (Allegro) • Andante/Allegro

Daniel Stepner, violin
Laura Jeppesen, viola da gamba

—INTERMISSION—

Concerto for Bassoon in B-Flat Major, RV 504 — Antonio Vivaldi (1687-1741)
Allegro ma poco • Larghetto • Allegro

Andrew Schwartz, bassoon

Concerto for Four Violins in B Minor, Op. 3, No. 10 — Vivaldi
Allegro • Largo • Allegro

Daniel Stepner, Linda Quan, Jane Starkman, Julie Leven, violins

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The program runs for approximately one hour and forty-five minutes.

The audience is respectfully asked to turn off all electronic watches, paging devices, and cellular phones during the performance.

The Handel and Haydn Society is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Program Notes

The Galant Virtuosi

We now think of music from the first half of the 18th century as "baroque," but in fact much of it might be better called by the name music-lovers of the time preferred: "galant," a word that can translate as "fashionable" or "stylish," and one which at the time had the force that "cool" does today. One of the most famous *galant* musicians of the mid-century was the famous violinist Giuseppe Tartini, who held the distinguished position of "Primo violino, e Capo di Concerto" at the famous Basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua. A visit to this shrine, and the opportunity to hear Tartini perform, became a regular feature of the Grand Tour of young noblemen. The great flutist and music-writer Quantz heard him play in 1723, and later remarked that "he really was one of the greatest violinists. He produced a beautiful tone from his instrument, and played the most difficult things perfectly and effortlessly. He can play a trill and even a double trill with all his fingers equally well..."

NOTES IN BRIEF

This concert brings together the music of several very different virtuoso performer-composers of the early 18th century. One of the stars of the eighteenth century, whose music is less-known today, is the Paduan violinist Giuseppe Tartini, who was famed for his effortlessly *cantabile* sound, his brilliantly fast articulations, and his inventive and profuse ornamentation. His "Devil's Trill" Sonata has become one of his most famous compositions, thanks to the demonically tricky trills of its last movement, and to the romantic legend of its inspiration (see sidebar). Tartini's concerto for viola da gamba reveals another side to the composer; its movements are filled with the elegant roulades and ornaments of the *galant* style. Though at the time Tartini's reputation was greater, today the work of his older colleague Antonio Vivaldi is far better-known. Vivaldi provided dazzlingly pyrotechnical challenges for his women students at the Venetian orphanage where he worked. His Concerto for Bassoon in B Flat is full of tongue-twisting passagework and breathtaking leaps across the entire range of the instrument, while the famous Concerto for Four Violins in B minor provides an ingenious series of solo displays for each player. One of the most famous soloists and accompanists of the time, the cellist Salvatore Lanzetti, is also featured in a rarely-heard cello sonata, full of wild figuration and demanding passagework.

This last achievement is one of the hallmarks of what has become his most famous composition, the "Devil's Trill" Sonata. The romantic (and romanticized) story of its supposed origins is retold in the sidebar to these notes. Whatever the demonic inspiration, this piece owes much to Tartini's previous work, so much so that some scholars doubt the work may be by Tartini at all. One of the problems with dating Tartini's huge output is that he frequently re-uses or revises his own work; essentially he had a large repertoire of melodic gestures at his disposal, some favorites of which turn up again and again. One of these is the *siciliano* tune that begins this sonata, an ardent melody that Tartini was particularly partial to. The second movement is a bold *tempo giusto*. Only

Antonio Vivaldi

with the third movement, titled in early editions "Sogni dell' Autore," do we come to the devilish trills that are said to have haunted Tartini's dreams.

In his day, Tartini was far more famous than Vivaldi, whose reputation hardly outlasted his lifetime.

Remarkably for an 18th-century composer, Tartini never wrote any vocal music, claiming that the "throat is far too different from the violin fingerboard." But he did write occasionally for other instruments besides his own. One concerto which survives in two manuscripts is for viola da gamba and string orchestra, enriched by two horns. Although the virtuoso viola da gamba tradition was dying out in Italy, some players there doubtless still cultivated both cello and viola da gamba, as many players do today; it's interesting to note that Italian players like Tartini's favorite colleague Antonio Vandini played cello holding the bow underhand, as one does with the gamba.

Unusually, this concerto is in four movements, beginning with a spacious *Largo* full of the characteristic gestures of the *galant* style: sighing appoggiaturas, breathless syncopations, and elegantly regular phrasing. In the following *Allegro*, the gamba is given brilliantly elaborate solo writing, full of turns and trills. The third movement is a *Grave* in AABB form, perhaps inspired (as so many of Tartini's movements are) by an operatic aria text. The concerto closes with a vigorous 2/4 *Allegro*. Each movement features an elaborate and often interestingly wayward cadenza, a written-out "capriccio" supplied by the composer.

In his day, Tartini was far more famous than Vivaldi, whose reputation hardly outlasted his lifetime. Today, of course, it is the vivid musical theatricality of Vivaldi that catches our ear. His bassoon concerto, RV. 504, is a fine example of just how inventive a composer he could be. Like most of his concerti, this work was probably written for one of his students at the Pietà, one of the Venetian foundling-hospitals which had by the eighteenth century become sought-after finishing schools for girls. Clearly, these girls could play: this wide-ranging concerto demands a significant degree of athletic virtuosity. And this concerto belies Vivaldi's unjust reputation for cookie-cutter regularity. The ritornelli of the outer movements are filled with a rich variety of motivic ideas that only gradually get explored by the soloist. The slow movement takes one of these ideas, a rushing downwards scale, and

transforms it into something slower and more operatic.

A particularly unknown name today is Salvatore Lanzetti, a virtuoso cellist who toured most of Europe before settling into a position at the court of Turin. Tartini doubtless heard him when he encountered his great rival Locatelli in Venice, since Lanzetti frequently served as Locatelli's accompanist. Our soloist, Reinmar Seidler, remarks that "there is no doubt Lanzetti was one of the most innovative cellists of his time, using thumb position, harmonics, complicated double-stopping, and fancy bow-work on a level that few of his contemporaries could have matched. These sonatas remain virtually unperformed even today. Perhaps this is because it is such eccentric music, often difficult to understand. Yet it is also strikingly individual, 'baroque' in the best sense: complex, detailed, highly gestural, speaking its own idiom, and reflecting the full gamut of human emotions."

Our program closes with one of Vivaldi's most famous works, the Concerto for Four V.iolins in B minor from his groundbreaking collection of 1713, "L'estro armonico." Vivaldi arranged for these twelve concerti to be published by the great Amsterdam printer Etienne Roger, who took a considerable gamble on a then-unknown composer; these part-books were by far the largest music-printing project Roger had ever taken on. It paid off, though: the collection was a hit throughout Europe. J.S. Bach was so intrigued with this concerto in particular that he later arranged it for four harpsichords. It's easy to hear why these concertos so caught the ear of musical Europe. The B minor, for example, opens not with a grand orchestral ritornello, but with one single violin, answered after a moment by another. When the tutti does come, each soloist contributes a different motif, creating a kaleidoscopically varied texture out of very simple elements. The outer movements provide ample opportunity for each of the four soloists to shine, with unexpected duets adding variety to the solos. At the heart of the piece stands one of Vivaldi's most remarkable gestures: each soloist arpeggiates in a different pattern, creating a hypnotically minimalist web of sound.

-Robert Mealy

Robert Mealy is the Handel and Haydn Society's Christopher Hogwood Research Fellow for the 2003-2004 season. A scholar and performer, Mr. Mealy has recorded and toured with many period instrument ensembles, including Sequentia, the King's Noyse, Les Arts Florissants, the Boston Camerata and Handel and Haydn. He frequently writes on music, and teaches historical performance at Harvard and Yale.

A devilish dream

The story of the "Devil's Trill" comes to us from a French traveler, J.J. de Lalande, who claimed to have heard the tale from the composer himself: "One night Tartini dreamt that he had made a contract with the devil... whatever Tartini wanted was granted to him, and all his wishes were anticipated by his new servant, who gave him his violin... What was Tartini's surprise when he heard a sonata so original and lovely that he could never have imagined anything like it! He experienced such amazement, admiration and delight that he woke up; he immediately seized the violin in the hope that he would be able to remember at least a part of what he had heard, but in vain..." Tartini's favorite pupil Nardini told this story to others as well, remarking that his teacher had found the devil's music so overwhelming that "if he had another way of making a living, he would have given up music altogether." Perhaps not surprisingly, this haunting story inspired several nineteenth-century productions, including a melodrama, a ballet, and even an opera. Since its first appearance in Cartier's monumental *L'Art du Violon* of 1798, the piece has remained in the solo violin canon, although all too often it is heard with elaborate modern additions.

Artist Profiles

Grant Llewellyn, Music Director

Now in his third season as Music Director of the Handel and Haydn Society, Grant Llewellyn has earned the acclaim of critics and audiences alike, and has established his presence as an engaging and dynamic force in Boston's musical life. Mr. Llewellyn has served as Assistant Conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Stavanger Symphony, and Principal Conductor of the Royal Flanders Philharmonic. He retains an especially close link with the BBC National Chorus and Orchestra of Wales, where he holds the title of Conductor in Residence. He has conducted many of the world's leading orchestras, such as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Toronto and Houston Symphony Orchestras. Opera engagements include productions with the English National Opera, Spoleto USA, and the St. Louis Opera Theatre. In demand around the globe, this acclaimed musician appears this season with Opera North in Leeds, the Utah Symphony Orchestra, the Southwest German Radio Orchestra (Stuttgart), the Kansas City Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic, and in subscription concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In 2002 Llewellyn became the subject of a BBC Television documentary aired throughout the United Kingdom.

Handel and Haydn Society

Under the leadership of music director Grant Llewellyn and conductor laureate Christopher Hogwood, the Society is a leader in historically informed performance, specializing in music for chorus and orchestra from the Baroque and Classical eras. Each Handel and Haydn concert is distinguished by the use of instruments, techniques, and performance styles typical of the period in which it was composed. Now in its 189th season, the Society has a long tradition of musical excellence, including the American premieres of Handel's *Messiah* (1818), Haydn's *The Creation* (1819), and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1889). Recent seasons have offered collaborations with prominent jazz artists, a series of semi-staged operas, and programs with dance, including Gluck's *Orfeo* with the Mark Morris Dance Company and, most recently, Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610,* which travels to London in the fall of 2004. Handel and Haydn has been featured nationwide on NPR's acclaimed "SymphonyCast" program and on numerous recordings, such as Sir John Tavener's *Lamentations and Praises* for which it won a 2002 Grammy Award. The organization's Educational Outreach Program brings the joy of classical music to more than 10,000 students each year.

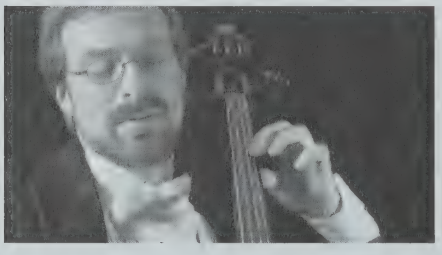
Daniel Stepner, director/violin

Handel and Haydn's concertmaster Daniel Stepner is also first violinist of the Lydian String Quartet, a member of the Boston Museum Trio , Artistic Director of the Aston Magna Festival in the Berkshires, and a Preceptor in Music at Harvard University. He has been concertmaster for a number of orchestras, including Boston Baroque, the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra and the New Haven Symphony. Mr. Stepner hails from Wisconsin, and his major teachers were Steven Staryk in Chicago, Nadia Boulanger in France, and Broadus Erle at Yale. He has recorded extensively and teaches at Brandeis University.

Laura Jeppesen, viola da gamba

Laura Jeppesen is a graduate of the Yale School of Music and studied the viola da gamba at the Brussels Conservatory. Her Boston affiliations are as gambist with The Boston Museum Trio and Charivary, and as violist with the Handel and Haydn Society and Boston Baroque. She has appeared in music festivals and concerts throughout the United States, Europe, Australia, and Japan with a number of early-music ensembles, including the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century and Sequentia. She has been a soloist under conductors Christopher Hogwood, Martin Pearlman, Edo de Waart and Seiji Ozawa. Ms. Jeppesen has recorded extensively and is on the faculty of Wellesley College.

Reinmar Seidler, cello



Reinmar Seidler, cello, leads a diverse musical life encompassing performance, teaching, conducting, and research. He appears regularly as principal cellist with Boston's Handel and Haydn Society and Cleveland-based Apollo's Fire, and has also served as principal cellist with the Portland (OR) Baroque Orchestra, California Bach Ensemble, and other baroque organizations across the U.S. As modern cellist, he has premiered works for solo cello by Mumford, Gibbons, Stumpf, List, and Hodkinson, as well as many chamber works with the Boston Composers String Quartet and the Arden String Quartet. He can be heard on several Ken Burns documentary soundtracks.

Andrew Schwartz, bassoon

Bassoonist Andrew Schwartz has appeared throughout the world as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player. His varied and intriguing career ranges from frequent appearances with the Metropolitan Opera, recording jazz with Wynton Marsalis, as well as on Broadway as a member of the original cast of Peter Brook's *La Tragdie de Carmen.* Equally accomplished on historical instruments, Mr. Schwartz has appeared as soloists with many of the finest period-instrument ensembles, including the Handel and Haydn Society, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Tafelmusic, Rebel, Apollo's Fire, and the Orchestra of St. Lukes.

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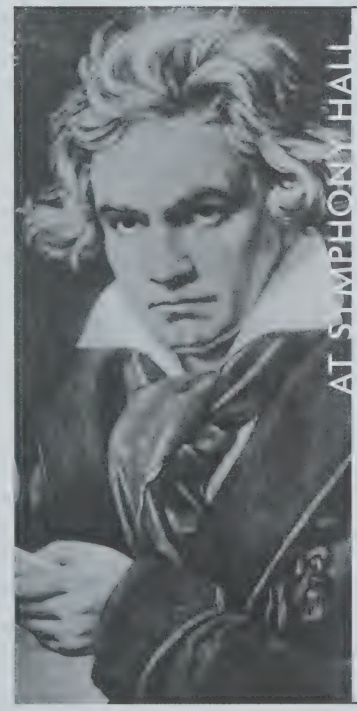

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MUSIC WORKSHOPS bring a vocal quartet and pianist who offer an engaging lesson in music and history, in a format that encourages children to respond to the music and interact with musicians.

PARTICIPATORY YOUTH CONCERTS pair high school choruses with the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra and Chorus for performances in local communities.

THE VOCAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM identifies and nurtures young vocal talent, and provides elementary and high school students with a high degree of personalized training. VAP ensembles include Singers (preparatory), Youth Chorus, and Young Women's Chorus (high school) under the direction of Matthew Garrett and Lisa Graham.

The program offers the resources young singers need in order to reach their full potential, musically, academically, and personally.

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